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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 13 August 1997, the President of the Security Council, acting on behalf of the members of the Council, issued a statement (S/PRST/1997/43) expressing deep concern about the situation in the Republic of the Congo following the outbreak of factional fighting in its capital, Brazzaville, on 5 June 1997. The Council expressed particular concern at the plight of civilians caught up in the fighting, which had resulted in widespread loss of life, displacement of the population and severe humanitarian conditions in Brazzaville.

2. The statement also recalled my letter to the President of the Security Council dated 20 June 1997 (S/1997/483), in which I drew attention to the request of the President of Gabon for the deployment of an appropriate international force to Brazzaville, and to the relevant letters to me from the President of the Republic of the Congo and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (S/1997/495, annexes I and II).

3. The Security Council set three conditions for the establishment of such a force: (a) adherence to an agreed ceasefire; (b) agreement to international control of the Brazzaville airport; and (c) a commitment by the parties to a negotiated settlement covering all political and military aspects of the crisis. The Council took the view that, despite some positive political developments, those conditions had not yet been fulfilled and called upon the parties to fulfil them without delay. At the same time, I instructed the Secretariat to continue its close contacts with potential contributors to a peacekeeping force to be deployed in Brazzaville under appropriate conditions.

4. Since the issuance of the Security Council statement, the situation in the Republic of the Congo and its capital, Brazzaville, has undergone both sharp deterioration and radical transformation, in spite of the substantial mediation efforts carried out by the International Mediation Committee led by President Omar Bongo of Gabon and assisted by the United Nations/OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region, Mr. Mohammed Sahnoun. The recent developments and their apparent outcome have forced a complete change in the assumptions on which United Nations military planning had been based.

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5. I therefore wish to bring to the urgent attention of the Security Council the latest situation in the Republic of the Congo, as well as my proposals to mitigate the humanitarian crisis arising from the conflict, in order to assist as appropriate in transitional arrangements leading to free and fair elections and to consider the role the United Nations system might play in mobilizing resources for a coordinated reconstruction and rehabilitation programme.

II. THE SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

6. The conflict in Brazzaville has been marked by widespread violence and confusion, as well as great suffering on the part of the population, as described in greater detail in section V below. It now appears that, following a sharp intensification of the fighting in recent days, the forces of one of the parties to the conflict, General Denis Sassou-Nguesso, have broken the deadlock that had persisted since the onset of the crisis and seized effective control of the capital.

The course of the armed conflict

7. Fighting erupted in Brazzaville in June 1997 when the armed forces of the Government of President Pascal Lissouba, supported by his militia, clashed with the militia of General Sassou-Nguesso, a former head of State. Following a respite of some weeks afforded by the signing of a ceasefire agreement in mid-July, fighting resumed in August and escalated with the use of attack helicopters apparently piloted by foreign mercenaries paid by President Lissouba. Both sides have apparently had free access to arms and ammunition, with arms purchases often being funded from oil revenues.

8. In the past few days General Sassou-Nguesso, having captured the presidential palace and seized at least partial control of the airport, appears to have taken control of the entire city of Brazzaville amid very heavy and widespread fighting. The conflict spread to the part of the city previously controlled by the former Mayor of Brazzaville, Mr. Bernard Kolelas, who had remained neutral in the earlier phase of the conflict but was named Prime Minister by President Lissouba in September.

9. The sudden upsurge in fighting drove thousands of Brazzaville residents to abandon the city. Much of the capital had already been deserted by its inhabitants since June, when the rival forces formed confrontation lines that split the main business and residential district in two. The apparently indiscriminate or unskilled use of heavy weapons and the aerial bombardments carried out by attack helicopters during September have further devastated the city. The number of fatalities, estimated at 4,000 well before the latest and most violent phase of the fighting, is unknown. According to reports, including a letter dated 13 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/791), two unidentified military aircraft flew over Brazzaville and dropped bombs, killing at least 20 persons.

10. The fighting has not been confined to Brazzaville, and is reported to have involved the use of foreign forces, including mercenaries. In August there were

reports of clashes at Impfondo and Ouesso in the north of the country. Information from a number of sources indicates that Angolan troops equipped with tanks have entered the Republic of the Congo and seized two southern cities, Dolisi and Loudima, near the Cabinda enclave of Angola. Portuguese-speaking troops and tanks have also been seen in the streets of Pointe Noire, the centre of economic activity and the heart of the Congolese oil trade, which has since surrendered to the Sassou-Nguesso forces.

Alleged involvement of foreign forces

11. With the reports of involvement by Angolan troops from Cabinda, the impact of the Congolese conflict on the region as a whole has come into sharp focus. Elements of the former Zairian and Rwandan armed forces, as well as elements of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), have for some time been said to be operating on one side or the other of the conflict, as have foreign mercenaries. There have also been a number of exchanges of shellfire between Brazzaville and Kinshasa across the Congo River. In response to those attacks, military observers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were reportedly sent from Kinshasa into Brazzaville.

12. On 13 October 1997, the President of the Security Council received letters from the Permanent Representatives of both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo (S/1997/790 and S/1997/791). In his letter, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, citing the death and destruction caused by repeated bombardments of Kinshasa from Brazzaville, requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the "premeditated aggression" perpetrated against his country.

13. In his letter, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo also requested the convening of an emergency meeting of the Council, and complained of an act of aggression involving the entry into Congolese territory of a heavily armed convoy, including tanks, from Cabinda, in Angola, and reports the aerial bombardment of Brazzaville.

14. However, in a letter dated 16 October 1997 addressed to both the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/1997/802), the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations strongly rejected the accusations made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo. The letter stated that the Angolan armed forces, exercising their right to self-defence, had pursued armed groups operating from the Republic of the Congo. Following this action, the Angolan forces had returned immediately to their base in Cabinda.

15. In a communiqué issued by the Office of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 15 October 1997 and conveyed the following day to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/803), the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stated: "No soldiers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been present in the territory of the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) since the return of a number of observers who had been dispatched, by joint agreement, to the two warring factions."

III. MEDIATION EFFORTS

16. Efforts to mediate the crisis have been led by the International Mediation Committee chaired by President Bongo of Gabon. The joint United Nations/OAU Special Representative, Mr. Sahnoun, has also been actively involved in the mediation of the conflict in close collaboration with the Governments of States within and outside the region in a position to exercise influence in favour of a peaceful solution to the crisis. Until his appointment as Prime Minister in September 1997, mediation efforts in Brazzaville itself were led by the National Mediation Committee of Mr. Kolelas, then the city's Mayor, who had withheld his own forces from the fighting.

17. On 16 June 1997, President Bongo wrote to me (S/1997/483, annex) asking the Council to authorize the rapid deployment of an inter-African force in Brazzaville. On 20 June, I wrote to the Council to suggest options for United Nations action (S/1997/484).

18. On 23 June 1997 (S/1997/495, annex II), the Secretary-General of OAU, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, wrote to me to convey the communiqué issued by the Organization's Central Organ for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, expressing full support for President Bongo's request to the Security Council to set up the force. On the same day, the Chiefs of State and Heads of Government of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, at their Conference held at Lomé, issued a declaration expressing its willingness to take part in an inter-African peace force under the aegis of the United Nations and OAU (S/1997/512, annex).

19. After briefing the Security Council on those developments on 3 July, Mr. Sahnoun returned to the region and, working closely with President Bongo and Mr. Kolelas, continued to do his utmost to arrange a ceasefire and ensure respect for it by the parties. On 10 July, Mr. Sahnoun again travelled to Brazzaville and met with all the parties to discuss the ceasefire and to encourage them to return to the negotiating table. On 12 and 13 July, President Lissouba and General Sassou-Nguesso signed, with certain reservations, a ceasefire agreement, which came into effect at midnight on 14 July.

20. Talks then continued in Libreville under the aegis of the International Mediation Committee, which, on the basis of a draft accord submitted by President Bongo, included the following elements:

(a) Priority measures to consolidate the ceasefire, including a definitive cessation of fighting, the dissolution of the militias, the creation of a mixed military commission and other elements;

(b) Agreement by both parties to the deployment of an international peacekeeping force under the aegis of the United Nations and OAU, and a commitment to unreserved cooperation with it;

(c) The establishment of a Government of national union responsible for organizing free, transparent and democratic presidential elections under the supervision of the United Nations and OAU;

(d) Specific measures to consolidate peace, reconciliation and national unity.

21. Despite reaching agreement on many aspects of the accord, the parties remained divided over the selection of a Prime Minister to lead the Government of national union, as well as the distribution of powers between the Prime Minister and the President and the modalities of eventual elections.

22. Following a meeting in Kinshasa between President Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, President Bizimungu of Rwanda and President Museveni of Uganda, and a subsequent meeting between Presidents Lissouba and Kabila, President Kabila offered, on 18 August, to mediate in the conflict and to deploy an inter-African buffer force in the Republic of the Congo. The offer was rejected by the Sassou-Nguesso side.

23. On 19 August 1997, OAU appealed to the Security Council to send a peacekeeping force to the Republic of the Congo, citing the serious situation there and the threat it posed to peace in the region. OAU expressed grave concern over continued violations of the ceasefire and appealed to the parties to adhere to the ceasefire agreements. OAU also expressed support for the mediation efforts of President Bongo.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS

Consultations with potential troop contributors

24. In my 20 June letter to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/484), I proposed the option of a multinational force established by a group of Member States that would be responsible for the command and control arrangements of the force and its financing. The second option I put forward was the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force.

25. Pursuant to the decision of the Security Council on 21 June 1997 to authorize me to consult with potential troop contributors to a force in the Republic of the Congo, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations arranged a series of meetings with the permanent missions of a total of 45 countries from all regional groups during June, July and August. The purpose of the meetings was to explain the concept of operations being developed by the Secretariat for possible deployment in Brazzaville and to invite interested Governments to identify the support they might be able to provide either to a multinational force or to a peacekeeping operation in terms of troops, logistic support, air transportation or finance. The Secretariat also sought to identify a country able and willing to take the lead in a multinational force. Potential troop contributors were also briefed on the findings of the technical survey team sent to Libreville and Brazzaville (see below).

26. Planning was carried out on the assumption that the mandate of the force, whether a multinational force or a peacekeeping operation, would be to secure the airport and ensure its functioning as a neutral zone; to assist in the maintenance and consolidation of a ceasefire; to create conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and to facilitate political

reconciliation leading to the creation of an environment conducive to a peaceful settlement of the conflict through the conduct of elections. The force would operate under robust rules of engagement.

27. In their consultations with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, a number of Governments expressed willingness to participate in a force authorized by the United Nations by contributing ground troops or logistical and air transport support, and some offered specific units. Most potential contributors specified that the force should be a United Nations peacekeeping operation rather than a multinational force. No country emerged that was able and willing to assure the command, control and communications capacity, the rapid deployment capability or the ability to generate the necessary financing that would be required to assume the leadership of a multinational force.

Dispatch of technical survey team

28. The dispatch of a technical survey team to assess conditions on the ground and to assemble technical and logistical information concerning the condition and capacity of airports and other transport facilities and the availability of local services and supplies is an essential prerequisite for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation. Accordingly, after consulting with members of the Security Council, I dispatched a technical survey team to Libreville and Brazzaville on 25 July.

29. In Gabon, the team conducted a thorough survey of the airports of Libreville and Franceville, met with the representatives of the two Congolese parties and of the National Mediation Committee in Libreville and were received by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence of Gabon.

30. In the Republic of the Congo, team members met with President Lissouba, General Sassou-Nguesso and Mr. Kolelas, as well as with the military staffs of both sides at a joint meeting. Members of the team also inspected the confrontation line, known as the "bande verte", which at that time ran from Maya Maya airport through the central business and residential district to the Congo River. During this inspection, the team was caught in a prolonged exchange of fire.

31. The team also completed a full survey of the airports and other relevant infrastructure and the servicing and supply capacity in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Bernard Miyet, briefed the Security Council on the technical and military findings of the team on 8 August.

32. The team found the humanitarian situation in Brazzaville to be cataclysmic, with at least 500,000 of the original 900,000 inhabitants having been displaced, with the consequent risks of malnutrition and the spread of disease.

33. I have since sent two military experts back to the region to assist Mr. Sahnoun in assessing military and security conditions in Brazzaville.

V. THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

34. The fighting in Brazzaville has involved the indiscriminate shelling and aerial bombardment of crowded neighbourhoods, causing significant loss of life, heavy material damage and large-scale population displacements. It is now feared that the number of casualties may be in the tens of thousands, while at least 500,000 people are thought to be internally displaced. Some 33,000 Congolese refugees have been registered at the Kinkole camp outside Kinshasa and are being assisted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

35. Heavy looting of shops, homes, offices and warehouses has taken place throughout the duration of the conflict. On 16 October, looters broke into the World Health Organization's regional office in Brazzaville, stealing about 50 vehicles and causing extensive damage to documents and computer data of various United Nations agencies and the loss of irreplaceable medical records from throughout the African region. The total cost of the damage and thefts are estimated in millions of dollars.

36. Brazzaville and many areas to the north have been cut off from supplies of food and other basic necessities for several months. The characteristic effects of war, displacement and overcrowding are evident in the population, including shortages of food and clothing, child malnutrition and outbreaks of communicable diseases.

37. Owing to the security situation, access to most parts of the Republic of the Congo is very difficult. All United Nations agencies have been evacuated from the capital. There is no permanent international presence in the country, except in Pointe Noire. As a result, information on the humanitarian situation is very sketchy.

38. On 1 October 1997 the World Food Programme began a large-scale food distribution exercise in Pointe Noire. The United Nations Children's Fund, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Médecins sans frontières, is providing emergency health assistance to the displaced population in Pointe Noire. Limited emergency assistance programmes in the south were halted following the intensification of the fighting during the week of 13 October.

39. Access to the northern parts of the country, where many refugees from Rwanda and the former Zaire are located, has been extremely limited for security reasons. Until recently, Médecins sans frontières and ICRC provided basic health services in some areas. However, since 1 October, ICRC has not had access to the north. On 15 October, Médecins sans frontières was informed by the authorities in Kinshasa that it could no longer transport supplies from Kinshasa to Brazzaville. UNHCR continues to provide assistance to some 8,000 Rwandan refugees in the area of Loukolela on the Congo River. Besides the enormous security risks under which these organizations operate, the main problem is the procurement and transportation of supplies.

40. The situation is expected to worsen in the coming weeks with the onset of the rainy season. The living conditions of hundreds of thousands of people

without shelter will grow increasingly intolerable; diseases will spread more rapidly and relief operations will be hampered. In addition, many villages in the north have received large numbers of internally displaced persons, sometimes doubling the original population. This will have a severe impact on the food security of those villages.

41. If Brazzaville remains calm, large numbers of displaced persons are expected to return rapidly to the city. As the city's infrastructure has been virtually destroyed, external assistance will be required to provide for the basic needs of the returning population. In this context, the United Nations will conduct a humanitarian rapid assessment mission and initiate relief operations as soon as possible. Once the immediate requirements have been identified, a funding request will be issued to the international donor community.

VI. CONTINGENCY PLANNING

42. As the situation has evolved, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has, on my instructions and in close cooperation with potential troop contributors as described above, developed a series of contingency plans for the possible dispatch of a peacekeeping operation to the Republic of the Congo. Planning was conducted on the assumption of a permissive environment, that is, that the parties to the conflict would agree to the deployment of a United Nations force; that a ceasefire would be in place, at least on a strategic level; that the parties would agree to United Nations control of the airport; and that they would demonstrate willingness to reach a political settlement.

43. At an informal meeting on 14 October 1997, I briefed members of the Security Council on the latest plan, which was developed immediately prior to the reports of major advances by the Sassou-Nguesso forces. Subject to the authorization of the Security Council, I proposed the initial deployment of an advance mission headquarters in Libreville. If circumstances so required, the plan then envisaged the phased deployment of peacekeeping troops in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire and at the three strategic northern locations of Impfondo, Owando and Ouesso.

44. The rapid evolution of the situation since then, however, has prompted me to review further the options for United Nations involvement. If, as indeed appears to be the case, the Republic of the Congo is now effectively controlled by the forces of General Sassou-Nguesso, there would appear to be a need to refocus the efforts of the Organization. On the other hand, a formal cessation of hostilities would not by itself guarantee the return of security to the country. It is anticipated that the military situation in the Republic of the Congo will continue to be precarious for some time owing to the existence of ill-disciplined and heavily armed militias and the uncontrolled flow of arms and matériel into the country during the conflict. Planning will therefore now focus on the urgent need to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance in what is still a volatile environment. We would also stand ready, upon request, to draw up plans for assisting with the disarming and demobilization of the militias.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

45. Continued conflict in the Republic of the Congo, especially if the involvement of foreign forces persists, would represent a clear threat to regional peace and security. The United Nations system has a duty to take the lead in efforts to relieve the suffering of the people of the Republic of the Congo and to continue to support efforts by President Bongo, the International Mediation Committee and the United Nations/OAU Special Representative, Mr. Sahnoun, to resolve the political situation there.

46. The situation calls for both emergency and longer-term measures. The statement issued by the President of the Security Council on 16 October 1997 (S/PRST/1997/47) represents a useful beginning.

47. It will now be necessary to follow up on the Council's call for a cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of foreign forces. In this connection, the Council has emphasized the importance of a political settlement, national reconciliation and the institution of arrangements leading to democratic free and fair elections with the participation of all parties. The deteriorating humanitarian situation deplored by the Council also requires urgent action to ensure the unrestricted delivery of humanitarian assistance on the basis of assurances from all parties concerning the safety of the civilian population and the security of humanitarian operations.

48. In this context, I note with satisfaction that General Sassou-Nguesso has expressed to Mr. Sahnoun his willingness to allow the humanitarian agencies access to the country and to facilitate their access to Brazzaville, and that he has stated that his forces have already begun preparing the airport for that purpose.

49. General Sassou-Nguesso has affirmed his intention to engage in a dialogue with all political leaders in order to work out transitional arrangements for governing the country. He has stated that the transitional period would be of a reasonable duration and would lead to the conduct of free and fair elections. General Sassou-Nguesso is reported to have acknowledged that he would need the assistance of the international community to rehabilitate the country and organize those elections. I am concerned, however, at reports that some members of his forces have made vengeful and belligerent statements, and I appeal to all concerned to recognize that the time for violence has passed and to act in a spirit of national reconciliation.

50. The enormous damage inflicted by the armed forces of the Congolese parties on their capital in recent months has created a need for a considerable reconstruction and rehabilitation programme. I intend to seek the views of potential donors on the role the United Nations system and bilateral donors can play in mobilizing resources for such a programme and in assisting in its implementation, which could go forward in parallel with emergency humanitarian aid efforts.

51. In the event that the United Nations is requested to provide assistance to help ensure the safety and security of humanitarian operations, I am prepared to draw up plans for a suitable United Nations presence. I will also initiate

preparations for assisting in a programme of national reconciliation leading to the conduct of free and fair elections with the participation of all parties.

52. Mr. Sahnoun is exploring ways of promoting those objectives. On the basis of his reports, I shall revert to the Security Council with a more detailed statement of needs in relation to emergency humanitarian relief, electoral assistance and a possible rehabilitation and reconstruction programme.

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Agenda items 58, 60, 97, 98 and 157
RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS
STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
UNITED NATIONS REFORM: MEASURES AND PROPOSALS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 22 October 1997 from the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you herewith the Joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Costa Rica of 16 October 1997 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the enclosed statement and this letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 58, 60, 97, 98 and 157, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sergei V. LAVROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Russian Federation to the
United Nations

(Signed) Fernando BERROCAL SOTO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Costa Rica to the
United Nations

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ANNEX

Joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Costa Rica, issued in Moscow on 16 October 1997

From 14 to 17 October 1997, Mr. Fernando E. Naranjo Villalobos, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica, paid an official visit to the Russian Federation.

During the course of the first official visit at such a level in the whole history of Russian-Costa Rican relations, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Mr. E. M. Primakov, and of Costa Rica, Mr. F. Naranjo Villalobos, stressed the importance of the tradition of over a century of contacts and ties between the two States, the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of which had been widely celebrated this year in both countries.

It was emphasized that Costa Rica was the first country in Central America to establish and develop relations with Russia. The stability and maturity of those relations provided a solid foundation for the further development of political dialogue and increased cooperation between the two States.

The Ministers agreed that Russia and Costa Rica should make their relationship an even closer one, and should actively support the efforts of the international community towards the strengthening of peace by strict compliance with the obligations laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and with the universally recognized rules of international law.

They declared themselves in favour of a new and more democratic world order based on the strengthening of collective security and the development of cooperation in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres and in the defence of human rights.

Noting that both countries were founding Members of the United Nations and actively involved in the work of the Security Council, the Ministers paid special attention to questions concerning the reform and strengthening of the role of the Organization. In that connection, they responded positively to the proposal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and stressed the importance of a comprehensive approach to reform which took into account all proposals designed to ensure the Organization's greater efficiency.

The Ministers reiterated that sanctions imposed by the Security Council were one of the instruments that could help to achieve effective compliance with its resolutions. They believed that such sanctions should be imposed only in exceptional cases, when there was a real threat to international peace and security and when all available means had been exhausted. In particular, the Ministers expressed their concern over the consequences which such sanctions could have for the civilian population, and declared themselves in favour of careful implementation, in proportion to the real dangers and with clear time limits.

The Ministers stressed the indissoluble link between security, freedom, economic growth, social justice and environmental protection, all of which formed the basis for sustainable development.

They also declared themselves in favour of ensuring worldwide sustainable development through decisive international action, and confirmed their support for the principles that had emerged from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In that connection, they expressed their willingness to work together to protect the environment.

The Ministers attached great importance to the role of the United Nations in promoting and managing international cooperation. They believed it was important to encourage a more flexible, transparent and coordinated interaction between the Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the other regional and multilateral organizations.

They noted that an important guideline for the activities of the United Nations was the implementation of the principles set out in the Agenda for Development, which had been agreed upon by all Member States and was based on a comprehensive approach to the problems of development.

In their analysis of the situation in Latin America, they stressed the growing importance of the region, both in geopolitical terms and with respect to the world economy, in the structure of the multipolar world that was emerging. They noted the significance of developments in the region: the stabilization of the political situation, the strengthening of democratic bases, the economic boom and the active pursuit of regional and subregional integration. The Russian side reaffirmed its policy of strengthening its multilateral and bilateral relations with the countries of the region.

The Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the great advances made in Central America following the end of the armed conflicts and reiterated their appeal to the world community to continue to provide assistance to countries in the subregion in order to consolidate democracy and promote sustainable development and integration.

The Ministers declared themselves firmly in support of respect for all human rights, including the rights of minorities. They agreed to cooperate with a view to reducing abuses of such rights, as well as all incidences of intolerance, aggressive nationalism and racism.

With regard to the processes of the building and consolidation of democracy, they emphasized the importance of having a State governed by the rule of law, firmly rooted in the independence of the judiciary, and of having electoral institutions in a framework of pluralism and unrestricted freedom of thought.

The Ministers exchanged views on the social and political changes and economic reforms taking place in their countries.

With a view to renewing and broadening the legal basis for cooperation between Russia and Costa Rica, Mr. E. M. Primakov and Mr. F. E. Naranjo Villalobos signed an intergovernmental agreement on the abolition of visas for holders of diplomatic and service passports, and a programme of cultural and scientific cooperation for the years 1998-2000. The Ministers also agreed to continue negotiations for the speedy signing of a trade agreement, an agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation, a protocol on the equivalence of educational qualifications and levels, an agreement on cooperation in the area of tourism, and an agreement on cooperation in physical culture and sports, and to draft an agreement on cooperation to combat illegal trafficking in drugs and other psychotropic substances.

The Ministers decided to hold more in-depth, high-level political consultations, as well as more consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries, which would be facilitated by the intergovernmental protocol on political consultations which had been signed during the visit.

They stressed that Russia and Costa Rica were striving to make their economic and trade ties more efficient and direct. The Ministers welcomed the recently concluded agreement on cooperation between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Russia and the Costa Rican Union of Chambers and Associations of Private Enterprise, as well as the prominent participation in the programme of the official visit to Russia of a group of Costa Rican businessmen.

Mr. Primakov and Mr. Naranjo Villalobos declared themselves in favour of pursuing further the political dialogue between the two countries, as well as developing links between their parliaments, and expressed their satisfaction with the visit to Russia by Costa Rican parliamentarians in September 1997.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to him and his delegation during their visit to the Russian Federation, and invited Mr. E. M. Primakov to pay a reciprocal official visit to Costa Rica on a date to be agreed through the usual diplomatic channel.

(Signed) E. M. PRIMAKOV
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Russian Federation

(Signed) F. E. NARANJO VILLALOBOS
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Costa Rica

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Chile, Costa Rica, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous relevant resolutions, and in particular its resolutions 687 (1991) of 3 April 1991, 707 (1991) of 15 August 1991, 715 (1991) of 11 October 1991, 1060 (1996) of 12 June 1996, and 1115 (1997) of 21 June 1997,

Having considered the report of the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission dated 6 October 1997 (S/1997/774),

Expressing grave concern at the report of additional incidents since the adoption of resolution 1115 (1997) in which access by the Special Commission inspection teams to sites in Iraq designated for inspection by the Commission was again denied by the Iraqi authorities,

Stressing the unacceptability of any attempts by Iraq to deny access to such sites,

Taking note of the progress nevertheless achieved by the Special Commission, as set out in the report of the Executive Chairman, towards the elimination of Iraq's programme of weapons of mass destruction,

Reaffirming its determination to ensure full compliance by Iraq with all its obligations under all previous relevant resolutions and reiterating its demand that Iraq allow immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to the Special Commission to any site which the Commission wishes to inspect, and in particular allow the Special Commission and its inspection teams to conduct both fixed wing and helicopter flights throughout Iraq for all relevant purposes including inspection, surveillance, aerial surveys, transportation and logistics without interferences of any kind and upon such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Special Commission, and to make use of their own aircraft and such airfields in Iraq as they may determine are most appropriate for the work of the Commission,

Recalling that resolution 1115 (1997) expresses the Council's firm intention, unless the Special Commission has advised the Council that Iraq is in substantial compliance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of that resolution, to impose additional measures on those categories of Iraqi officials responsible for the non-compliance,

Reiterating the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Kuwait and Iraq,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Condemns the repeated refusal of the Iraqi authorities, as detailed in the report of the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, to allow access to sites designated by the Special Commission, and especially Iraqi actions endangering the safety of Special Commission personnel, the removal and destruction of documents of interest to the Special Commission and interference with the freedom of movement of Special Commission personnel;

2. Decides that such refusals to cooperate constitute a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions 687 (1991), 707 (1991), 715 (1991) and 1060 (1996), and notes that the Special Commission in the report of the Executive Chairman was unable to advise that Iraq was in substantial compliance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 1115 (1997);

3. Demands that Iraq cooperate fully with the Special Commission in accordance with the relevant resolutions, which constitute the governing standard of Iraqi compliance;

4. Demands in particular that Iraq without delay allow the Special Commission inspection teams immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to any and all areas, facilities, equipment, records and means of transportation which they wish to inspect in accordance with the mandate of the Special Commission, as well as to officials and other persons under the authority of the Iraqi Government whom the Special Commission wishes to interview so that the Special Commission may fully discharge its mandate;

5. Requests the Chairman of the Special Commission to include in all future consolidated progress reports prepared under resolution 1051 (1996) an annex evaluating Iraq's compliance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 1115 (1997);

6. Expresses the firm intention - if the Special Commission reports that Iraq is not in compliance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 1115 (1997) or if the Special Commission does not advise the Council in the report of the Executive Chairman due on 11 April 1998 that Iraq is in compliance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 1115 (1997) - to adopt measures which would oblige all States to prevent without delay the entry into or transit through their territories of all Iraqi officials and members of the Iraqi armed forces who are responsible for or participate in instances of non-compliance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 1115 (1997), provided that the entry of a person into a particular State on a specified date may be authorized by the Committee established by resolution 661 (1990), and provided that nothing in

this paragraph shall oblige a State to refuse entry into its own territory to its own nationals or persons carrying out bona fide diplomatic assignments or missions;

7. Decides further, on the basis of all incidents related to the implementation of paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 1115 (1997), to begin to designate, in consultation with the Special Commission, individuals whose entry or transit would be prevented upon implementation of the measures set out in paragraph 6 above;

8. Decides not to conduct the reviews provided for in paragraphs 21 and 28 of resolution 687 (1991) until after the next consolidated progress report of the Special Commission, due on 11 April 1998, after which those reviews will resume in accordance with resolution 687 (1991), beginning on 26 April 1998;

9. Reaffirms its full support for the authority of the Special Commission under its Executive Chairman to ensure the implementation of its mandate under the relevant resolutions of the Council;

10. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

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S/1997/817
22 October 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 22 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to inform you that on 3 October 1997, the fourth Ministerial Meeting of the ad hoc Special Conference on Liberia (previously known as the ad hoc Special Conference to Support the Peace Process in Liberia) was convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The meeting was organized in consultation with the Government of the United States of America on behalf of the International Contact Group for Liberia, the Government of Nigeria on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Government of the Netherlands. In addition to those Governments, the meeting brought together the members of the International Contact Group on Liberia, the European Union and ECOWAS, as well as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the African Development Bank, and relevant United Nations departments, programmes and specialized agencies. The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS also participated in the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to build upon the momentum generated by the successful completion of the Liberian peace process, with a view towards supporting efforts to consolidate the peace in Liberia, including the establishment of a viable framework for the mobilization of resources for reconstruction and development. In this regard, the Government of Liberia prepared for presentation at the Special Conference, a paper outlining its vision for a new Liberia, entitled "An Agenda for Rebuilding Liberia".

In my opening statement to the Special Conference I urged the members of the international community to support peace-building efforts in Liberia and to help ensure that the conditions for conflict did not again materialize in that country. In particular, I noted the difficulties that still remained, including the fact that economic activity remained modest, that much of the population continued to be displaced, that most of the demobilized fighters had yet to be absorbed into reintegration programmes, that basic institutions and services were not yet fully operational and that the situation in Sierra Leone remained a source of concern.

Despite these obstacles, however, I noted the very positive steps that President Taylor had taken towards reconciliation and national unity, and noted

the formation in Liberia of a broad-based and inclusive Government, together with the President's expressed commitment to promoting the protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law. I informed participants that the proposed United Nations Peace-building Support Office would soon be established in Liberia, and that the Head of the Office would be the focal point for the Organization's post-conflict peace-building activities in Liberia and have overall responsibility for harmonizing the efforts of the United Nations system in the country. I called upon the members of the international community to show the same generosity and goodwill in supporting the peace-building process as they did in supporting the peace process.

I am pleased to report that the meeting successfully accomplished the objectives for which it had been convened. In addition to focusing international attention on the need to provide continued support to Liberia following the successful completion of the peace process, the meeting was notable for:

- The strong support expressed by participants for the establishment of a United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia;

- The broad political support expressed by participants for President Taylor's efforts to establish an inclusive administration, and for the various actions taken by the new Government to promote reconciliation and national unity (although some participants expressed concern regarding certain recent actions taken by the Liberian police);

- The continued assurances given by the Government of Liberia regarding its commitment to reconciliation, national unity and respect for human rights;

- The very positive reaction of participants to the Government's plans for rebuilding Liberia, as set out in the "Agenda for Rebuilding Liberia", which was prepared by the Government for the Conference;

- The supportive attitude adopted by the Bretton Woods Institutions towards the new Government's economic and political initiatives, specifically including the framework outlined in the "Agenda for Rebuilding Liberia", the economic and customs reforms instituted thus far and the presentation to the Legislature of a balanced cash-based budget;

- The support expressed by participants for a donor's conference for Liberia, which would most likely take place early next year.

In view of the difficult peace consolidation and reconstruction challenges that Liberia continues to confront, it is my intention to continue to move as expeditiously as possible with the establishment of a United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia, as requested by the Government of Liberia. I am encouraged in this undertaking by the very broad support expressed by the international community for this initiative and by the positive cooperation demonstrated by all parts of the United Nations system, in keeping with the spirit of my reform proposals.

The Secretariat will be consulting with the Government of Liberia and the principal bilateral and multilateral donors on the most effective means of following up on the positive outcome of the meeting, including the timing of the anticipated donor's conference on reconstruction and development.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

UNITED NATIONS

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23 October 1997

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Agenda item 61
QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 22 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 22 October 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex which contains a letter of His Excellency Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, dated 21 October 1997, would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

97-28349 (E) 241097

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Letter dated 22 October 1997 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the copy of a letter dated 21 October 1997 addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, in connection with the speech delivered by the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, at the 25th plenary meeting of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, held on 6 October 1997, and his letter dated 29 September 1997 addressed to you and circulated as document A/52/412-S/1997/762.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ Plümer
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

APPENDIX

Letter dated 21 October 1997 from Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the speech delivered by the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, at the 25th plenary meeting of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, held on 6 October 1997, and his letter dated 29 September 1997 addressed to you and circulated as document A/52/412-S/1997/762.

In his address before the world body (see A/52/PV.25), Mr. Clerides has once again tried to portray the Turkish Cypriot side as the intransigent party with a barrage of allegations directed against us in the knowledge that, for reasons which are well known to all and need not be repeated here, there would be no Turkish Cypriots present to challenge his unfounded assertions. I am, therefore, compelled to respond to his remarks in writing.

In his speech, Mr. Clerides has conveniently forgotten his previous statements to the effect that he would be attending the direct negotiations that recently took place between the two sides at Troutbeck, New York, and Glion, Switzerland, "against his better judgement". The same Mr. Clerides also said that the Greek Cypriot decision to attend the direct talks was "a purely cosmetic move in order not to appear the negative side and so harm the Republic's prospects of accession to the European Union" (The Greek Cypriot press, 3 June 1997). This has been the entire strategy of Mr. Clerides during the face-to-face talks.

The talks that I and Mr. Clerides had at Troutbeck and Glion against this background were not impeded by any "preconditions" brought to the table by the Turkish Cypriot side, as Mr. Clerides claims, but by the rigid and immutable position of my counterpart which can be summed up as the rejection of the key aspects of a viable, just and realistic settlement, such as sovereignty, security and guarantees, political equality, the all-too-important balance between Turkey and Greece stipulated by the 1960 Agreements, and bi-zonality to be consolidated by property exchange.

While Mr. Clerides refused to budge an inch on those key issues that are vital for us and are indispensable elements of the bi-communal, bi-zonal settlement that we are seeking, the unwarranted interference of the European Union (EU) in the negotiations created further obstacles in the way of a comprehensive settlement. Here, I am referring to the European Commission's report entitled "Agenda 2000" which, in complete disregard of the rule of law, the international treaties governing Cyprus, and our justified objections to EU membership before a settlement, envisages the commencement of accession negotiations with "Cyprus", meaning the Greek Cypriot administration, in early 1998. It will be appreciated that the Greek Cypriot side, which had made no secret of the fact that it would be attending the direct negotiations only to enhance its prospects for EU membership, had no incentive to show the necessary flexibility at the negotiations in the light of the EU approach of clearing the way for accession negotiations prior to a political solution.

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As for the subsequent Association Council Agreement signed between Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on 6 August 1997, with which Mr. Clerides takes issue, I would like to reiterate that the agreement is nothing beyond a legitimate self-defence mechanism established in the face of the incessant Greek Cypriot attempts to impose its will on the Turkish Cypriot side through EU membership, which is unfortunately being encouraged by the words and deeds of EU itself. The Turkish Cypriot side could not be expected, in all fairness and justice, to sit idly by, without taking any action, while EU took steps bolstering the Greek Cypriot aspirations to turn Cyprus into a Greek Cypriot State in which our people would be treated, at best, as a "protected minority".

The very fact that I attended the second round of the direct talks held at Glion, in spite of the negative atmosphere created by the "Agenda 2000" report of the European Commission and my people's strong disappointment at the one-sided approach of EU, is testimony to our goodwill and commitment to achieving an overall settlement of the Cyprus question. The Turkish Cypriot side cannot be held responsible for the biased approach of EU, which has been the real impediment to progress in the talks.

It is ironic that the Greek Cypriot leader, who criticizes the Turkish Cypriot side for taking peaceful political measures to defend its rights and interests through establishing closer ties with Turkey, considers it his side's "sovereign right" to purchase and deploy any weapons it deems necessary, including the sophisticated S-300 missile system in defiance of the relevant Security Council resolutions and regardless of the serious dangers this poses to peace and stability both on the island and in the region. The range and capabilities of the S-300 missile system are manifestly beyond Greek Cypriot defence requirements and constitute a threat against Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side.

Given the massive rearmament programme of the Greek Cypriot administration, the hiring of mainland Greek and Serbian soldiers for active duty, the ongoing construction of a naval base in the south for Greece and the opening of the newly constructed military air base for use by the Greek Air Force it is amply clear that the acquisition of the missiles is only a part of the provocative military preparations in south Cyprus carried out in line with the so-called "joint defence doctrine" with Greece.

An indication of the true intentions behind the joint Greek-Greek Cypriot front's activities has been the massive joint military exercises code-named "Nikiforos 97" carried out in south Cyprus between 10 and 14 October 1997. The joint manoeuvres, which turned out to be a real show of force with the participation of the Greek Air Force and Navy, were clearly offensive in character, involving the use of live ammunition and Greek paratroopers in a mock invasion of northern Cyprus. As if the display of such war scenarios was not obvious enough for all concerned, the Greek Cypriot Defence Minister, Mr. Costas Iliades, has made remarks to the effect that the Greek Cypriot side is ready for every kind of military action and that they are preparing surprises for Turkey (Greek Cypriot press, 6 October 1997).

This contrasts with the role of the Turkish Peace Force in Cyprus, which has kept the peace in Cyprus for over two decades. Mr. Clerides cannot use this in order to justify the Greek Cypriot arming frenzy, bringing current military expenditure in southern Cyprus to more than $2 million a day, nor his irresponsible attitude to push ahead with the deployment of the S-300 missile system in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions reiterating concern over the introduction of such sophisticated weaponry into the Greek Cypriot arsenal.

It is a contradiction on the part of the Greek Cypriot side to profess "demilitarization" while at the same time refusing the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) package of proposals, which envisages the unmanning of certain areas along the buffer zone where the opposing forces are in close proximity to each other, the prohibition of loaded weapons along the ceasefire lines and a common code of conduct for soldiers deployed on both sides of the buffer zone. The truth of the matter is that the Greek Cypriot "demilitarization proposal" is simply a ruse for doing away with the Treaty of Guarantee, the only effective instrument which has stopped the Greek-Greek Cypriot drive for union with Greece and saved the Turkish Cypriot people from complete annihilation.

The Turkish Cypriot side has repeatedly made it known that, as envisaged in the United Nations set of ideas, demilitarization is a long-term objective which must not, and will not, adversely affect the Treaties of Guarantee and of Alliance.

As for Mr. Clerides' allegations on the humanitarian question of missing persons, it will be recalled that following the resignation in early March 1996 of Mr. Paul Wurth as the third member of the Committee on Missing Persons, former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali wrote to me and Mr. Clerides twice in 1996, informing us that unless the points he outlined in relation to the work of the Committee on Missing Persons were implemented by both sides, he would not consider appointing a new third member. As the Turkish Cypriot side, we have accepted the Secretary-General's request and reiterated our support for his approach in our letter dated 17 February 1997 addressed to you as his successor. The Greek Cypriot side, however, has dismally failed to comply with the Secretary-General's requests and continued to play politics with the issue, only extending the agony of those who have lost their loved ones.

In conclusion, I wish to stress once again that the Greek Cypriot side, with the inhuman embargoes it has imposed against the Turkish Cypriot people; its so-called "joint defence doctrine" with Greece and accompanying militarization campaign bringing instability to the entire region; its unilateral drive to become an EU member; and its persistent refusal of partnership with the Turkish Cypriot side, has been erecting obstacle after obstacle in the way of a negotiated settlement and will continue to do so for as long as it is allowed to pose to the world as "the sole legitimate Government for the whole of Cyprus".

The Turkish Cypriot side is dedicated to achieving a just and lasting solution in Cyprus and will continue to work constructively with you and your representatives in the search for a mutually acceptable settlement. It is our

firm belief, however, that until and unless the two sides in Cyprus are accorded full equal status, the Greek Cypriot side will continue to render fruitless all efforts towards a negotiated settlement. I remain hopeful that, at this critical juncture we have reached in the negotiating process, the international community will act in awareness of this reality in its approach to this long-standing dispute.

(Signed) Rauf R. DENKTAŞ
President

UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

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S/1997/819
23 October 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 23 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government I have the honour to inform you of the following:

At 1530 hours on 19 October 1997 three Kuwaiti patrol boats equipped with automatic weapons and each having four armed men on board opened fire on Iraqi coastguard vessels which were in the demilitarized zone.

I would request you to intervene with Kuwait to bring an end to these acts of provocation, which constitute a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law. I also wish to reaffirm the right of the Republic of Iraq, in accordance with the principle of international liability, to seek compensation for the harm suffered as a result of these actions.

I should be obliged if you would have the text of this letter circulated to the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

97-28405 (E) 231097 231097